



For immediate release  
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### **Rapid Response Team activated to aid ShopKo employees**

JOPLIN, Mo. -- The state activated its Rapid Response Team to help workers who will be laid off by the closing of ShopKo, a department store in Joplin. Approximately 83 employees will be laid off on April 14, 2001.

Composed of representatives from the Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Development (DWD), the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, the Workforce Investment Region of Southwest Missouri and the local Missouri Career Center, the Rapid Response Team provides special training and re-employment services for workers who have lost their jobs.

Joseph L. Driskill, director of the Department of Economic Development, directed DWD to assist ShopKo employees by offering Missouri Career Center services. "Our goal in offering these free services is to help these individuals find suitable new employment as soon as possible," Driskill said. "Unfortunately, layoffs are a natural part of the economic cycle. I urge local companies in need of skilled employees to consider hiring these individuals."

The Rapid Response Team and the local Missouri Career Center will provide immediate services to workers needing assistance, including assessment and testing, career counseling and resume writing, interviewing skills, job search methods, on-the-job training and tuition assistance for vocational training or education.

Representatives from DWD are working with the company to ensure that workers have access to these free services. Meetings will be held with the employees at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 6 p.m. March 8, 2001 at the ShopKo facility in Joplin. Employees affected by the closing include cashiers, customer service specialists, maintenance staff and pharmacy staff.

Employers interested in hiring former employees of ShopKo may call **1-800-877-8698**.

Since 1983 -- when Missouri's dislocated worker program was established -- more than 100,000 dislocated workers have participated in the program. Approximately 80 percent of the people assisted by the program find new employment.

Laid-off workers interested in the training and re-employment services offered through the Rapid Response Team can call **DWD at 1-800-877-8698 or the local Missouri Career Center at 1-417-629-3000**.